



I. Introduction

A. PLAN PURPOSE & ORGANIZATION

The General Plan for the City of Cottonwood is intended to guide and direct future growth and development decisions for the City for the next decade and beyond. The plan is built upon the 2003-2013 General Plan with consideration of the changes that have occurred over the past decade.

This Plan was developed in 2012-2014, with guidance and direction from the public, as well as the General Plan Steering Committee, Planning and Zoning Commission, City Council and various other agencies and organizations. The process has included public surveys, open houses, workshops and various public meetings and presentations. It is the intent of this Plan to reflect the hopes and dreams of the community for a positive, healthy, prosperous and meaningful future:

- A city of opportunities, that is “respectful of its past and focused on its future”
- A prosperous and confident place that recognizes it is blessed with a tremendous physical beauty and location, great people and cooperative neighbors.
- A city that welcomes and appreciates diversity and embraces change as it comes.
- A city that is committed to being adaptable and forward-thinking while maintaining its core values.
- A city that cares about its people and its future.

What is a General Plan?

The General Plan provides a basis for public policy decisions concerning land use, transportation, open space and related development. The plan establishes a common vision for the community, which in turn guides decision making by public officials. The vision is developed in response to input from citizens, organizations, agencies and appointed and elected officials. Each Element of the General Plan includes narrative background, associated references to related programs, and Goals and Objectives that are intended to guide future decisions regarding growth and development.

The General Plan promotes regional coordination with other land management agencies, including surrounding cities and towns, Yavapai County, Arizona State Land Department, Arizona State Parks, the United States Forest Service and other agencies.

City planning enables a formal public process for identifying the issues that affect us the most, for developing a community vision to serve as a guide for addressing those issues, and for public discussion of alternatives and solutions. People often express concern about the future well-being of their community and the quality of the life they will leave behind for future generations. The General Plan is also intended to be adaptable to changing circumstances and changing understandings of how best to proceed. Procedures are described to allow consideration of amendments to the plan in a manner that respects the goals set forth by the community.

There are many issues that a growing community faces and many differences of opinion on how best to handle them. In Cottonwood, there is a desire to balance the rich heritage and small town qualities of the community with the increasingly more complex needs of a growing population so as to ensure all the positive attributes that people desire are achieved. This includes positive economic opportunity, a healthy natural environment, safe prosperous neighborhoods, effective physical infrastructure and a great quality of life. This General Plan intends to present a positive and optimistic vision of that future.



B. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR GENERAL PLANS

The “Growing Smarter” legislation approved by the Arizona Legislature in 1998 and amended in 2000, describes the statutory requirements for general plans in Arizona Revised Statutes, Title 9 (Cities and Towns.) Seven elements are required for a city the size of Cottonwood. The intent and specific requirements are described for each element. The Growing Smarter legislation also requires adoption of a public participation policy and plan amendment process for establishing and making amendments to the plan.

C. PLAN ELEMENTS

Arizona Revised Statutes requires that the general plan for Cottonwood include the following elements:

- Land Use
- Circulation
- Open Space
- Growth Areas
- Environmental Planning
- Water Resources
- Cost of Development

In addition, Cottonwood’s General Plan also includes the following elements and chapters:

- Introduction
- Vision and Guiding Principles
- Housing Element
- Historic Preservation Element
- Plan Administration

INTRODUCTION AND GUIDE FOR PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The introduction to the general plan includes a series of statements intended to describe the collective vision of the community in a broad sense. The development of the mission statement, vision statement and related guiding principles may change over time as the details of the plan are implemented. The following descriptions explain the functional relevancy of the terms used to present the City’s planning policy in the General Plan.

Vision Statement.

A vision statement is an expression of a community's shared aspirations and expectations for the future. It is an ideal description of an end state for a community at a particular point in time. The vision statement is intended to confirm the overall direction of the General Plan Update.

Guiding Principle.

A guiding principle is an assumption, fundamental rule, or doctrine that furthers the intent of the vision statement by providing direction and policy guidance in the development of general plan goals, policies, and implementation strategies. Guiding principles describe values that serve as a framework for the plan. They are more of a starting point than a final conclusion.



ORGANIZATION OF EACH ELEMENT

The various goals, policies, and statements should be seen as of equal components of a comprehensive integrated document. It may be considered that individual goals and policies will vary in their scope and importance to the community. Each issue should be considered on its own merit, as well as how it combines to form an integrated perspective.

Each of the various Elements of the General Plan is structured to include:

- Introduction
- Legislative Requirements
- Key Issues
- Text and Background Material
- Goals and Objectives
- Plan Maps

The following explains the functional relevancy of the terms used to organize the plan elements.

Introduction.

The Introduction to each Element provides an overview of each issue and lays out the general structure of that element. The Introduction describes the purpose and intent of the Element.

Legislative Requirements.

Each element includes the related section of Arizona Revised Statutes, as well as any other local, state or federal legislation pertaining to the topic.

Key Issues.

This section provides a brief summary of some of the key issues relating to the element.

Narrative Text and Background Material.

The text portion of each element provides a range of introductory, supporting and background information. The text defines opportunities and limitations, as well as relationships to other parts of the Plan. Each Element has unique characteristics and includes different types of related background material and support information as necessary to support the particular topic.

Goal.

A goal is a general expression of community values. Goals are meant to provide a comprehensive overview of the topic being addressed in a way that addresses the needs and interests of the entire city. Goals provide a general strategy and statement of interest to guide decision making for future development. A goal is not quantifiable, time dependent or suggestive of specific actions for achievement.

Objective.

Objectives are intended to further refine each Goal while still having community-wide applicability. An objective provides a concise statement or method of action which addresses a goal. An objective should be achievable and, when possible, measurable and time specific.

Implementation Strategy.

Some elements include recommendations for actions that could be taken to implement programs. An implementation strategy is an action, procedure, project, program or technique that carries out a program, goal or objective. Implementation strategies provide guidance for decision making while recognizing that specific strategies may change in both the short-term and long-term due to changing circumstances or interests of the public.



General Plan Maps

Some of the maps that express key concepts within the plan include the following:

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| 1. Land Use Plan | - Indicates long-range land use categories by intensity and density. |
| 2. Planning Sub-Areas | - Planning sub-areas indicate areas of similar concern. |
| 3. Circulation | - Street Classifications, including proposed streets. |
| 4. Traffic Counts | - Indicates daily traffic levels for key roads and intersections. |
| 5. Public Lands | - Federal, state and local lands, school districts. |
| 6. Community Facilities | - Parks, trails, public buildings, fire stations, etc. |
| 7. Growth Area Map | - Areas that meet the Growth Area Element criteria. |
| 8. Vicinity Map | - Indicates relationship of regional jurisdictions and road systems. |

Protection of Private Property Rights

Neither the implementation of this General Plan, nor any of its Elements, shall constitute an unconstitutional taking of property or property rights, and the General Plan and its Elements shall not deprive any landowner of any vested right to develop his or her property. This General Plan shall be interpreted so as to be consistent with all federal and state laws, rules, and regulations governing the use of real property.

Any landowner who believes that the application of any policy within the General Plan has resulted in an unconstitutional taking of his or her private property may file a claim with the local government, specifying the basis for the claim. The local government may, based on such claim, amend any of the policies contained within the General Plan, to avoid any unconstitutional taking of private property. When it does so, it shall act only pursuant to a finding, based on substantial evidence in the administrative record, and without substantial evidence to the contrary, that the policy complained of does, in fact, constitute an unconstitutional taking of a landowner's property. Any such amendment to a policy contained within the General Plan shall be made only to the minimum extent necessary to avoid such an unconstitutional taking.



D. COTTONWOOD HISTORY

Cottonwood has a rich and interesting history regarding its modern settlement and development over the past century and a half. In addition, the local area and region has long been home to Native Americans, with evolving cultural groups, including the Paleo-Indian culture from at least 11,500 to 9,000 B.C., the Western Archaic people from 9,000 B.C. to 300 A.D. and later, the Sinagua people who are thought to have left their hilltop pueblos in the area around 1400 A.D. The contemporary Yavapai-Apache Nation came from the Yavapai and Apache people who stretch their roots deep into the land and history of this region.

The first frontier settlers in the Cottonwood area farmed and provided goods to the soldiers at Camp Verde and the miners in Jerome beginning about 1879. In 1917, Jimmy “Rawhide” Douglas began operating the second copper smelter in the region so as to process ore from Jerome. The area between Mingus Avenue, Willard Street and Sixth Street became known as Clemenceau. Clemenceau (named after Georges Clemenceau, the Premier of France at the time) was a complete company town with thousands of residents, a school, post office and other community facilities. Copper ore was delivered by railroads that connected to Jerome. The smelter operation operated round-the-clock to serve the high demand for copper in those years. There are a number of historic buildings and structures from the smelter era that tell some of the story of the size and complexity of the original “Smelter City.”

The development of Clemenceau starting in 1917 stimulated growth in the nearby downtown Cottonwood area, as well. The downtown area, now known as “Old Town Cottonwood,” became a haven for those seeking to be free from the prejudice and regulation of nearby company towns. The Mason Addition, Willard Addition, Hopkins Ranch No. 2, and other property tracts were recorded during the next decade, coinciding with the development of Clemenceau on higher ground to the south.

The Clemenceau smelter operated for almost 20 years from 1917 to 1936. The smelter closed on December 31, 1936 with a great loss of jobs and disruption to the economy of the area. The Cottonwood Women’s Club organized to feed those in need and helped raise money to build the Cottonwood Civic Center (1939) with labor supplied by the Works Progress Administration. The copper industry continued its decline, culminating with the closure of the Phelps Dodge mining operation in the early 1950s. The population of the Upper Verde Valley dropped sharply upon the closing of the mines but it wasn’t long before the next era started.

Cottonwood incorporated as a town in 1960. During this period more roads were developed and improved. Starting in the late 1950s, State Route 89A, locally known as the “Bypass Road,” and SR 260 were developed to serve the needs of the Phoenix Cement Company located north of Clarkdale. The Cement Plant was developed to supply concrete for the building of the Glen Canyon Dam project near Page, which took from 1959 to 1964. Prior to the development of the Bypass Road, the main route through town was U.S. 89A, which went through downtown Cottonwood (now Old Town Cottonwood,) through downtown Clarkdale and then up to Jerome.

From 1958 to 1961, the Grandview Terrace subdivision and Verde Heights Unit 2 expanded housing between the new Bypass Road and the older Verde Heights neighborhood on the hill overlooking the downtown area. These subdivisions provided improved streets, coordinated infrastructure and related housing development. Also starting in the late 1950s, the Verde Palisades neighborhood, providing one-acre sized residential lots, was developed on the rolling hillside in the area between the new Bypass Road and Fir Street.



During the early 1970s, about 4,500 lots were platted as unincorporated Verde Village adjoining the southern border of Cottonwood by Ned Warren of the Queen Creek Land and Cattle Company. In the 1970s and 1980s, with road development and a growing residential base, the commercial center of Cottonwood that had been located in the historic Downtown shifted south closer to the junction of SR 260 and SR 89A. Shopping centers with large footprint stores and large parking lots serving a growing regional population were developed in the new commercial core area.

In 1990, the City developed a wastewater treatment plant and collection system to serve the growing community. The wastewater treatment plant was expanded in the late 1990s to handle as much as 1.5 million gallons per day. The availability of the municipal sewer system has served a range of economic growth and job development opportunities in Cottonwood since its development.

Between 1990 and 2000, the City's population increased from 5,918 to 9,179, or 55%, mirroring the increase of nearby communities and Yavapai County, as a whole. From 2000 to 2010, the city's population increased from 9,179 to 11,265 or almost 23%. The growth rate slowed towards the end of the 2000s due to the national recession but overall the population of Cottonwood almost doubled in this 20 year period. Cottonwood's residential growth in the 2000s came from a variety of sources, including multi-family apartments, manufactured home developments, new platted subdivisions and continued infill development within existing neighborhoods.

During the 2000s the Verde Valley Medical Center continued to expand and develop state-of-the-art medical facilities, which has attracted additional medical offices and support services to the community. The medical community, regional retail, government center and affordable housing have helped Cottonwood define its role as the regional center of the Verde Valley.

In November 2006, the voters of Cottonwood approved the revenue bond and tax repayment plan for the \$17 million Cottonwood Recreation Center. The facility had its grand opening in May 2010, providing a 65,000 square foot, state-of-the-art recreation, aquatics and meeting facility for the community. The commitment to developing this much valued, high quality, public facility has also contributed to the growing interest in Cottonwood as an attractive community to live and do business in.

At the beginning of the 2010s, Cottonwood has seen renewed interest in residential development, small business development and a surge in tourism attributed to the growth of the regional wine industry and revitalization of the Old Town district. With its unique small town character, interesting civic activities, variety of housing types and range of economic opportunities, Cottonwood continues to see growing interest from people wanting to visit, recreate, live and work here.



E. POPULATION ESTIMATES

Every ten years the U.S. Census Bureau conducts a major national survey of every household in the country. They report on a range of demographic data, including population, age, gender, race, home ownership and other statistics. The data is presented in a number of formats based on states, counties, cities and various smaller sections. The statistical sub-areas are further broken down into tracts, block groups and blocks, which typically do not have a specific relationship to jurisdictional boundaries.

For purposes of estimating the population of communities within this region, it is necessary to look at detailed data from the US Census Bureau, including Census Tracts, Block Groups and Blocks.

VERDE VALLEY - CITIES AND TOWNS POPULATION GROWTH 1990-2010				
Community	1990	2000	2010.	% Change From 2000
INCORPORATED COMMUNITIES				
Cottonwood	5,918	9,179	11,265	22.7%
Clarkdale	2,144	3,422	4,097	19.7%
Camp Verde	6,243	9,451	10,873	15%
Jerome	403	329	444	34.9%
Sedona (Yav.& Coco.)	7,720	10,192	10,031	-1.5%
SUB-TOTAL	22,428	32,573	36,710	12.7%

VERDE VALLEY, YAVAPAI CO. & ARIZONA POPULATION GROWTH 1990-2010			
Community	1990	2000	2010
Verde Village, unincorporated	7,037	10,610	11,605
Big Park	3,024	5,245	6,147
Cornville	2,089	3,335	N/A
Cornville, Page Springs, Tract (TR) 17.01	Shown with "Cornville" N/A	N/A	5,779
Page Springs, TR 17.02.1	N/A	N/A	599
Bridgeport TR 20.03	N/A	N/A	4,270
Lk. Montezuma / Beaver Creek	1,841	3,344	4,706
SUB-TOTAL	13,991	22,534	33,106
V.V. TOTAL	36,419	55,107	69,816
Yavapai County	107,714	167,517	211,033
State of Arizona	3,665,228	5,130,632	6,392,017



Cottonwood Area Population Review

The following table includes a map-based analysis of US Census Bureau data describing the 2010 population within Cottonwood and the immediately surrounding area. The population data comes from Census Tract, Block Group and Block data, as required to provide an accurate and complete count of residents within the study area. The information reveals that as of Spring 2010, over 32,000 people live in this general area. This study area does not describe any particular political or community relationship. Instead it is intended to provide a general sense of the size of the population that lives, works, shops, recreates and generally shares a common relationship with this place.

GREATER COTTONWOOD AREA POPULATION 2010 - US CENSUS TRACT AND BLOCK DATA

Includes: Cottonwood, Clarkdale, Jerome, Verde Village, Cornville, Verde Santa Fe, Bridgeport, Page Springs and other surrounding unincorporated areas.

General Area	Census Tracts (TR), Block Groups & Blocks	Population of Tracts and Block Groups
Cottonwood / Clarkdale	TR 19.02	2,129
Clarkdale / Jerome	TR 19.03 – Selected Blocks	1,419
Clarkdale / Yav. County	TR 20.01	4,797
Verde Village	TR 20.02	4,907
Verde Village / Cottonwood	TR 20.04	8,207
Bridgeport / Cottonwood	TR 20.03	4,270
Cornville / Page Springs	TR 17.01	5,779
Page Springs	TR 17.02 Block I	599
SUB-TOTAL		32,107



F. REGIONAL SETTING

The 2010 US Census indicated that there were 11,265 residents living within the city limits of Cottonwood. There are 16.65 square miles of land within the corporate boundaries of Cottonwood. Adjoining and nearby the City there is the unincorporated subdivision of Verde Village (also with over 11,000 residents), the Town of Clarkdale (over 4,000 residents), Jerome (400+ residents) and other unincorporated residential areas. It is estimated that over 32,000 people reside in the surrounding Greater Cottonwood Area with 70,000 people residing in the overall Verde Valley region. The larger region includes the Sedona and Camp Verde areas, and various unincorporated communities of Yavapai County, as well as a portion of Coconino County that includes part of Sedona and Oak Creek Canyon.

Cottonwood is located in Yavapai County near the geographic center of the state of Arizona, approximately 100 miles north of Phoenix and 50 miles south of Flagstaff, with major access from I-17 by way of State Route 260. The City of Cottonwood is a part of an interconnected and inter-dependent region that includes the immediately surrounding communities, the Verde Valley region and Yavapai County. At each level there are unique issues that tie us all together through common interest.

People began to settle the area around present-day Cottonwood in the late 1800s to take advantage of opportunities for agriculture and trade to serve the growing mining activities in Jerome and later with Clarkdale. Early on, Cottonwood became the market center for the Verde Valley region. Over time, the City's role as the retail and service center of the Verde Valley has grown. The medical and senior living community has a major presence in the form of the Verde Valley Medical Center campus and surrounding commercial buildings, doctor's offices, laboratories and related medical and clinical services.

The Verde Valley region offers a beautiful and dramatic natural environment that is readily accessible from many locations. The region features a very diverse topography characterized by mountains, ridges, canyons and mesas. The generally sunny weather and pleasant year round temperatures are attractive to both residents and visitors, who come from around the state and from throughout the country. The Coconino and Prescott National Forests, as well as several State Park and National Park facilities offer a range of attractive outdoor recreational opportunities, historical resources and related programs.

The Verde Valley also contains the Verde River, the most significant section of free-flowing river in Arizona with five additional free-flowing perennial tributary streams in the vicinity. The Verde River Greenway includes 36 miles of lush, riparian habitat flowing through the Verde Valley.



◆ THE GREATER COTTONWOOD AREA

The City of Cottonwood is part of larger population area of separate communities that have grown over the years to now include over 32,000 residents. This general area includes Cottonwood and Clarkdale, as well as the unincorporated communities of Verde Village, Bridgeport, Cornville and Page Springs.

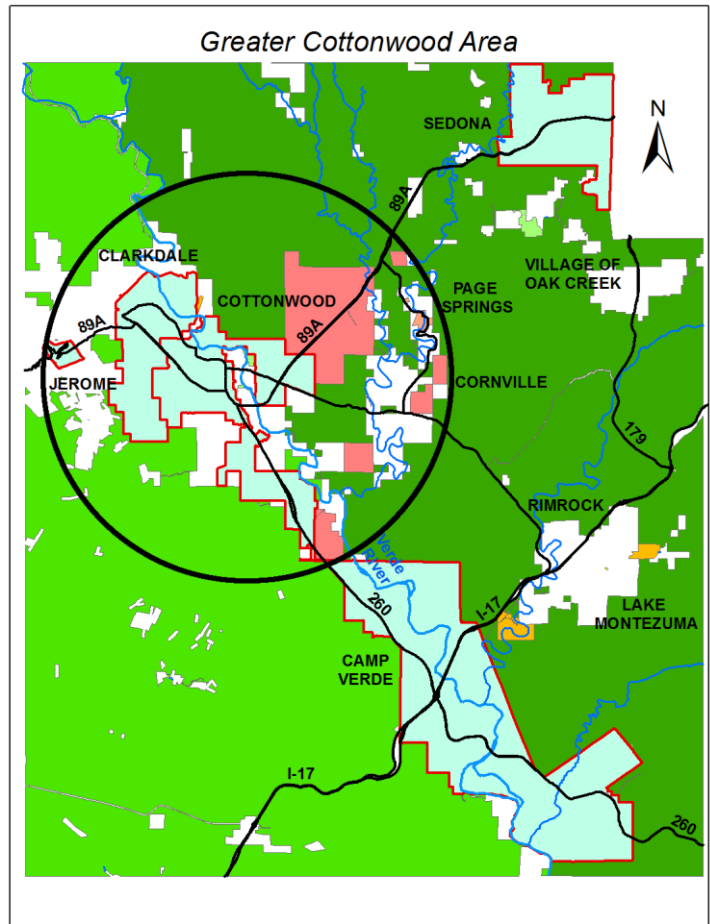
The residents of these areas may have distinctly different views on how they wish to live and govern those places. They have their own unique traditions, values and sense of identity related to their communities; however, these communities have also become increasingly interconnected in terms of physical, social and economic conditions. The connections are not based on the boundary lines between cities and towns but are shown through the everyday activities of life.

In addition to the relationships of family, friends and associates, the lives of many people within this area are interwoven with regards to employment, housing, schools, stores, recreation, entertainment, medical services, government offices, churches, clubs, organizations and all kinds of basic activities.

Cottonwood residents have expressed a strong desire to maintain the small town character and qualities of the community while also expressing a strong desire for having a healthy economy, good jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities. Recognizing the physical, social and economic relationships with the surrounding communities is a key part of any effort to achieve these important goals. These areas have much in common so any actions necessary to fulfill the goals and aspirations of Cottonwood are going to be influenced by this larger set of relationships.

For Cottonwood, there is a need to provide facilities, infrastructure and services at a scale capable of accommodating this larger population base, which interacts and moves through the city on a daily basis. This includes road systems, public safety, utilities, recreational facilities and a range of programs.

The role of Cottonwood as the hub of a growing sub-region is a key concept that organizes and informs the update to the General Plan. This perspective leads to unique challenges and unique opportunities for everyone.





◆ THE VERDE VALLEY REGION

The Verde Valley region occupies an area over 715 square miles in size. The Verde River runs through the west side of the region northwest to southeast and is augmented by flows from several major tributaries, including Sycamore Canyon, Oak Creek, Beaver Creek and West Clear Creek. The area is unsurpassed in its variety of physical beauty with the red rocks and Mogollon Rim to the north and east and the Black Hills and Mingus Mountain dominating the western and southern portions of the valley.

Cottonwood is located adjacent to the Verde River at an elevation ranging from 3,300 feet to 3,900 feet above sea level and experiences a generally mild climate with hot dry summers and an occasional dusting of winter snow. The community is located in proximity to an abundance of natural amenities such as Mingus Mountain, Dead Horse Ranch State Park, Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Area and Tuzigoot National Monument to name a few.

The Verde Valley region includes five incorporated municipalities, numerous unincorporated communities, parts of two counties, two National Forests, five State Park facilities, three National Monument facilities, a large amount of State Trust Land, Native American lands, mountains, canyons and the Verde River with its equally impressive tributaries. The Verde Valley can be described as a collection of unique rural communities each with their own history, diverse population and distinct landscapes.

Almost half the population of the Verde Valley lives in incorporated cities and towns with the rest living in unincorporated portions of Yavapai County with a portion in Coconino County near Sedona. The unincorporated County areas include both dispersed rural settlement and several more developed communities, each with their own unique identity and character. The five incorporated communities include City of Cottonwood, Town of Clarkdale, Town of Camp Verde, Town of Jerome and City of Sedona. There are a number of key unincorporated communities, including Verde Village, Bridgeport, Big Park/Village of Oak Creek, the Beaver Creek area, (Rimrock/Lake Montezuma/McGuireville), and Cornville/Verde Santa Fe/Page Springs.

◆ YAVAPAI COUNTY

Yavapai County provides many essential services and ties together the many incorporated and unincorporated communities throughout the region. The Yavapai County Verde Annex facility located on Sixth Street in Cottonwood is a valued resource that provides a range of services for the entire Verde Valley and eastern portion of Yavapai County.

The 2010 population for Yavapai County came in at 211,033. This required the County to change to a five district system for the Board of Supervisors. Yavapai County's structure changed to a five district system in 2012. Districts are established based on a combination of equal population and a fair balance regarding demographic representation. With the Verde Valley (Yavapai County portion) having a population around 68,000, that meant that the Verde Valley got roughly one and a half districts.

All of Yavapai County District 3 and part of District 2 are located in the Verde Valley. Cottonwood, Sedona and Village of Oak Creek are in District 3; and most of Cornville, Camp Verde and Beaver Creek join with Dewey-Humbolt and Cordes Junction to form District 2. In addition, the change to five Districts has required changes to formats for most County commissions and committees.

The City of Cottonwood's elected officials, staff and residents value the positive relationship they have with Yavapai County on many important issues. The support and resources provided by Yavapai County on many issues serve to improve the quality of life for everyone.